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"From that epoch the Protestant worship was received by many people who were wearied with the ceremonial and spiritual yoke of Roman Catholicism, and eager for a religion not of human policy or corrupt and false doctrine but of, the pure and divine religion of the Gospel. Hence it is that millions of Protestants are found in the world—and with them progress and civilization in the highest degree. And the reformation of the sixteenth century would certainly have made still further conquests (since its object was only to free men from the yoke of superstition, and to conduct them to religious liberty), but for the obstacles of imperial absolutism, the Inquisition and the order of Jesuits. So powerful were these obstacles that, after the first part of that century, in which so many abandoned Romanism, the religious movement stopped, and, except a few individual conversions, Rome retained all the nations which had not already deserted her. The number of Protestants did not materially increase. The truth, therefore, did not make progress, nor did liberty and civilization; for political institutions cannot improve, in any important degree, till both the people and their rulers understand their true interests—till, in short, the principle is everywhere recognised that religion is a thing of conscience, and not to be interfered with by governors, except so far as to preserve public order.

"We must confess, however, that the ignorance and coarse-mindedness of the people in general serve to instigate their spiritual rulers to keep them in religious slavery, so that they—innocent and imbecile instruments of the pride, avarice, and other passions of those rulers—bind chains round themselves, and, instead of seeking to enjoy the inestimable blessings of religious liberty and a faith of their own, they prefer believing without reflection whatever they are told.

"It is also true that, in the present state of Europe, many nations are (apparently) unable to do without a religion of pomp and ceremonies, and that, according to the opinion of many, if they should lose such a religion they would fall into infidelity, being unfit to raise themselves to a purer and more spiritual faith.

"But have Protestants a different disposition from Roman Catholics? Are not all men brethren? Was not the Gospel, in its most spiritual form, adapted in the earlier ages to both east and west? Surely, then, what is good for one nation is good for another. Therefore, the spiritual Christianity which Protestants now profess may become the religion of the Italians, since they have no less natural inclination for the truth than any other nation. The Gospel is Catholic, is universal: let it then be Catholic for all people."

This extract finished, the criminal counsel accused me—

1st. Of having excited contempt for the religion of the State, by saying "that the people were wearied with the ceremonial and spiritual yoke of Roman Catholicism, and eager for a religion not of human policy, and corrupt and false doctrines."

2ndly. Of having said "that the Roman Catholic religion was opposed to civilization, saying that in the present state of Europe," &c.

3rdly. Of having proclaimed it "a religion of ignorance," saying that "a spiritual Christianity might become the religion of the Italians."

Having made numerous digressions upon the lights and influence of Catholicism and the respect due to it, he concluded by urging that I should be condemned to two months' imprisonment and a fine of four hundred livres. The President then asked if I had anything to say in my defence?

I rose and said—That I had chosen an advocate to defend me legally; I had, therefore, nothing to say, except that I had been aimed at by the ultra-Catholic journals, in the falsest accusations, which pointed me out as a rationalist, a man without religion, &c.; so that it might well be said—"If such be the shepherd, what must be the sheep?" That I paid no attention to all this as long as I was alone in the cause, knowing that a public man cannot satisfy all, and that his duty is simply to continue in the way of conscience and loyalty. But when his religion is attacked—when the morality of his flock is called in question—then he ought no longer to be silent; silence becomes a crime. Wherefore, after six or seven months of abuse and vituperation against us, I took my pen to enlighten the public, whose business it was to pronounce judgment. One thing was certain, that as soon as the Vaudois were authorized by the government to erect their church in Turin, a torrent of insult and calumny was poured forth against them, by the journals of the ultra-Romanists, and that I was bound to reply, not with a view of irritating them or throwing contempt on their religion, but merely to neutralize the injurious effect which might result from so much abuse of us. We, the Waldenses, were citizens of the State; our worship was not only *tolerated* but *protected*, and we had a *right* to be respected.

For the rest, I was, indeed, convinced of the truth of my religion, but without intolerance; my writings and sermons, and even the accused article, breathed a spirit of charity, and recommended Christians, of various persuasions, to have no strife but in love, knowledge, and good works. That I did not believe that any magis-

trate could really condemn me; but I was ready to submit respectfully to any penalty it might be thought needful to inflict, for as the Waldense ministers are bound to preach obedience to the law, so they ought to set the example of it; and if they have transgressed, it is just they should be punished.

The Advocate Jecchio, minister of public works, and my counsel, now spoke:—

He observed—First, that the Waldenses have a right to a church in Turin for public worship, which had been authorized by the ministry alone, without a meeting of the Chambers. That, if public worship is sanctioned, it follows that it is both a right and a duty for the pastors to spread their faith both orally and in writings, and to combat contrary opinions; this does not involve a *scandal* against the State religion. That no attack against it had been made by Signor Bert, and nothing even said which could be subversive of the decisions of the Council of Trent.

That, on the other hand, the Romanist journals had put forth the most scurrilous abuse of Protestantism, and it was the duty of Signor Bert, both as a Protestant and as a pastor, to repel attacks which came even from the bishops of the State.

He then proceeded to read some extracts from the journals in question:—

The *Armonia* journal expressed itself thus, in the number for the 22nd of August, 1851:—

"The Protestants, then, will have their temple at Turin, and there all that is perverted in the capital will congregate, to hear preaching in which will be propounded all that is most poisonous against Catholicism."

"What is the Protestant religion but the fruit of northern sophisms, the worship of audacity and lasciviousness, which spring up amongst the Germans?"

"A Protestant temple at Turin: this is to call the stranger among us—to call down the refuse and scandal of Germany; it is to throw open our State to barbarian and intolerant sects, to degrade the dynasty of Savoy, whose highest merit it is, to have combatted these barbarian and ruinous doctrines. It is, in short, an insult to our statutes, to Italy, to our King."

In the number for the 28th of February, 1852, are found these expressions:—

"The Protestant religion only aims to persecute and kill whatever does not follow it. If any Protestant is merciful, this is not the fruit of Protestant doctrines, but of a mind naturally disposed to good, and formed by study and education; or, more frequently, it is the result of fear; they dare not put forth in all their fullness the doctrines which are brooding in their hearts, until they feel themselves strong enough to defend by force of arms what their pen expresses."

Nearly at the same time, the *Echo of Mont Blanc* expresses itself as follows:—

"The erection of a Waldense Church, at Turin, is an intrigue prepared, not with a view of raising up a place of prayer and religious instruction, but to create a focus for disorder and demoralization."

"The only dogma of the Protestants is, to kill the Pope and the King."

"The Piedmontese people do not deserve such an insult as that of allowing Protestantism to exist at their side." "Wherever it (Protestantism) penetrates, all it does is to spread ruin and bloodshed over the country." "To admit Protestantism is to approve the preaching of every kind of folly, disgraceful wickedness and monstrosity."

The *Catholico* of Genoa says, amongst other things, that

"The government, in authorizing the erection of the Waldense temple at Turin, contaminated the capital with that abominable, opprobrious worship."

And, finally, passing over much more abuse and continued revilings, this is the manner in which the Lord Bishops of the State, in their protest to his Majesty against the erection of the new temple at Turin, have expressed themselves on the subject of the Waldense religion:—

"Vanity, ignorance, love of novelty, and immorality, have availed themselves of the erection of the temple to scandalize good Catholics, to spread everywhere indifference on religious matters, and conduct the people by little and little to Atheism, the final, necessary, and fatal consequence of the spirit and mind of Protestantism."

The Advocate then proceeded to observe that M. Bert, in the accused article, had, indeed, narrated the corruption, the ignorance, and the abuses of the Romish religion, and especially in the times of Luther, on the occasion of the sale of indulgences; but these are things of public notoriety, and Signor Bert was not guilty in saying what every one knows. Not that the Christian religion—the infallible Word of God—can *itself* be corrupted; but fallible men ruin and corrupt, in their speeches and writings, even the religion of the Lord.

That, finally, Signor Bert is well known for his moderation and tolerance—which is shown even in the article in question. He then demanded that I should be acquitted free of all cost; but the tribunal, before deciding on my case, determined to consider the cause of the editor of the journal, who had inserted an article

in the same number of the "Progresso," written by a so-called *Ugo Belfiore*, on Roman Catholic prayers, images, and worship of the saints; for which he, like me, was prosecuted.

In fact, this *Ugo Belfiore* (an Italian and Roman Catholic emigrant) had unmasked, with much spirit, first, the absurdity of prayer in a language not understood by the people; secondly, the impiety of worshipping the saints, which is only the old Pagan folly restored, under another name, in Romanism; thirdly and finally, the gross superstition with which God is represented by images, while a worship is paid to the images themselves, as if there was something Divine and adorable in them.

The council for the editor then proceeded to speak. He first dwelt on the injustice of having waited eight months before proceeding to the public prosecution of the two cases; for such productions are good or bad according to the tide of public opinion at the moment. These two articles, which might be acquitted eight months ago, because they were conformable to the then state of public opinion, might now be condemned, merely because that public opinion had somewhat changed.

Secondly, For the rest, nothing had been written inconsistent with the respect due to the State religion; for even the Council of Trent had declared that the Church might substitute the vulgar tongue for Latin in prayers and preaching, if it seemed to her a good and desirable thing.

Thirdly, As to the worship of saints, the Council of Trent willed that men should have recourse directly to God, in the name of Jesus Christ, as a just and Christian practice; for God is not like the princes of this world, who have representatives through whom access to them is obtained. Many abuses on this point prevailed, and Belfiore had pointed out some of them; but the Council of Trent had exhorted men to destroy abuses, and had also commanded that no images should be made of the Most High, and no superstitious veneration paid to any, as if they had any virtue in themselves. Belfiore was, then, in accordance with the real desire of the Church of Rome.

The counsel then demanded, as Jecchio had done, that his client should be acquitted.

At the end of half an hour, the following sentence was pronounced by the tribunal:—

"Whereas, though in the article, entitled 'Is the new Waldense Temple a School of Immorality?' some strong expressions may be found, it appears that the author was excited to them by the *outrages* poured forth by the press against the Protestant religion—of which he is the pastor—in this capital; but no expressions can be found which contain any direct or indirect attack on the religion of the State; and with regard to the article, entitled, 'Prayer according to the Romish Church,' although it is innocent of the imputed crime (of aggression against the State religion), still the offensive comparison between our religion and that of the Pagans, and the degrading remarks on some of the saints, are likely to occasion scandal.

"Therefore, the Pastor Amadeo Bert and the Editor (the Advocate Grassi) are declared not guilty of the imputed scandal, and acquitted free of cost; but the editor (in consideration of the offensive words in the said article, [*Belfiore's*]) is condemned to five days' arrest and fifty-one lire fine."

I consider that the cause of liberty of conscience has thus gained an important victory. If we had written these articles in Naples, Rome, or Tuscany, we should have been sent to the galleys. . . . The five hours I spent at the bar of the accused were, for me, five hours of real happiness. I thank the Lord for it, with all my heart; and hope I may ever be enabled to defend our cause, in Piedmont, with moderation, truthfulness, and freedom, and be ready to suffer any penalty, if I can but be favoured to promote, more and more, the sacred cause of civilization through the Gospel.

THE ELECTIONS—A DIALOGUE.

John.—Tom, did you give your vote for Father M— at the election?

Tom.—I don't quite understand what you mean, John; surely the priest did not stand for the county?

John.—No, Tom. I did not mean that; but did you not hear that Father M— told us all, the Sunday before the election, that we were to vote for him, and for God, and for our holy religion; and that if we did not, we should be despised and shunned in this world, and eternally miserable in the next? and said that he would not give the rites of the church, when they were dying, to any that voted against his man; and, after mass, he said—Let those that intend to vote for — and heaven, go to the right, and those that are going to vote for — and hell, go to the left, and afterwards sent men round to all the boys' houses, to tell us not to dare to vote for any one but Mr. —; and the men told us that we might look sharp if we voted any way but the way he wished, for, if we did, we had better not show our face in the market at C —, and, coming winter, perhaps, our corn and hay would be burned, and maybe our houses too; and you know they smashed the windows of two or three that they were in

doubt of, by way of earnest as to what they would get.—You were a bold man if you set Father M—— at defiance after such warnings as them!

Tom.—And yet, John, they call this freedom of election and independence of voters. Did you see the address that the priest's man stuck up on the chapel gate? What was the heading of it?

John.—Why, I think it was—"To the Independent Electors," &c.

Tom.—Just so. But it is a queer kind of independence, to have our windows smashed, our stacks set on fire, afear'd to show our face in the markets or fairs, hunted in this world, and damned in the next, unless we vote as the priest orders; you don't call this freedom and independence, do you, John?

John.—Why, not exactly; but, then, surely the priest must know who is the best man.

Tom.—Why must he? What is the use of parliament giving us a right to vote, if we dare not give it to whom we like? The parliament had better at once have given all the poor people's votes to the priest, if they can ruin a man in this world and send his soul to hell in the next, for exercising his right to vote as he wishes himself.

John.—Well, Tom, there seems some truth in what you say; it does seem very strange that a man should be damned for voting for this man or that.

Tom.—Why, John, to tell the truth, my notion is, that these so-called liberal men are always the greatest tyrants. The priests get men returned that will play their game. It's little such priests care about the souls of their flocks, as they call them, or about their religion either, I'm thinking; it is their own interests they look to; they make the members that they have sent to parliament vote as they please; I hear tell that they are called the Pope's Band, or Priests' Brigade—they get acts passed which seem to give power to us poor people, but it is because they think that they can drive us like a flock of sheep to the hustings to vote as they please.

John.—Well, Tom, there's no denying what you say. Very little, I believe, they do care for us, except for what they make by us; but what can we do? We never could stand the country, if we went against them; they would make it too hot for us.

Tom.—That wouldn't be, John, if every one had the courage to give the priest his mind, the way Ned C—— did. Do you remember what Ned C—— said when the priest told him that he must vote for his candidate?

John.—I do, well. He said he would vote for whom he pleased, that the law gave him his vote to use as he liked, and that if his reverence would mind his religion more, and politics less, it would be better for himself and the country.

Tom.—And what did the priest say?

John.—What could he say, when it was the truth? He turned it off and said that it was his religion that he was asking the vote for; and seeing he could get no good of Ned, he went off to bully some one else.

Tom.—Now, John, let me ask you this question, What is the charge that the priest brings so often against the Protestant religion?

John.—That it depends on Acts of Parliament; or, as he says, it is "the Parliament religion."

Tom.—Well, now, and what does our own depend upon? If you do not vote so as to get a man in, that you do not know, and don't care for, you are to be ruined in this world, and damned in the next; is this religion? Do you call it religion, to make the eternal salvation of a man's soul depend upon giving a vote this way or that? Do not let us talk about the Protestant religion depending upon acts of parliament. No Protestant minister ever said that a man would be damned if he gave his vote to this man or that. Now, John, you have told me what the priest said at the chapel, you have told me that he said that our religion depended upon members of parliament; that men should have their houses in flames in this world and their souls in flames in the next, if they did not vote with him; now, let me tell you what the Scripture-reader said to me the other day. We talk very friendly together, though I call myself a Catholic. I said to him—well! Mr. ——— How will the election go? Well, Tom, he replied, I hardly know; I hope however that our Heavenly Father will so order things that peace may be preserved, and that such measures may be passed as will insure the happiness and welfare of our country; my prayer is—"That God may so order the course of this world by his governance, that his Church and people may be able to serve him in all godly quietness."

"Why," said I, "you seem to care very little about the election."

"No, Tom, you are mistaken," says he, "I care about everything that may bring happiness or misery to our country; and I hope the providence of God may so order it, that those who are sent to parliament may legislate for the honour and happiness of our Sovereign and our country."

"I wish, Mr. ———," said I, "that our priest took things as quietly; he says that our religion depends upon the election and the parliament."

At that he smiled and said—"And I begin to think he's right, Tom. The religion of the Church of Rome is

the religion 'of this world.'—John xviii. 36. It seems it must be maintained by violence, falsehood, fire, and sword. The priests feel this, and therefore they are stirring themselves so in this election. The weapons of the Church of Rome seem to be curses, threats, sticks and stones. The weapons of our religion are the truths and arguments of Scripture.—2 Cor. x. 4. Our religion—that is, the religion of the Gospel—is not "of this world." It does not depend upon such things as an election. It does not depend upon Acts of Parliament. It depends upon the Gospel of Christ, and therefore we can afford to be more quiet on such occasions. But as you have said so much of the election that the priests are so violent about, I will tell you of one kind of election that I feel very anxious about. The election which the priest seeks to carry will soon be over, and priests, candidates, and voters will soon be removed to another world, to give an account of all they have done in this. But the election which I am so anxious about, is one which our religion does really depend upon.

"Pray, Mr. ———," said I, "what election is that?"

"It is, Tom, the 'election of God.' God sent his only, beloved Son into the world that men might be saved; my business is to proclaim this blessed truth, to persuade men to embrace the Gospel. I cannot make them do so, that is out of my power—God alone can do that; God, the Holy Ghost, can alone lead men's hearts to embrace the Gospel. 'No man can come to the Son except the Father draw him.'—John vi. 44. To elect is to choose, and the Father hath chosen those whom he leads by his spirit to believe on his beloved Son, that they may be saved. This is the election on which real happiness in this world and in the next depends. My business is to try and persuade men to embrace the offer of God's mercy in Christ. If I succeed in this, and that I see them living by the rule of the Gospel, loving God and man—bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God—then I hope I have evidence that God hath chosen them unto eternal life. When I see a man giving evidence of a 'work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father' (1 Thess. i. 3-4), then I can say, as St. Paul does, that 'I know his election of God,' because the Gospel has come to such 'not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost.'; This, Tom, is the election that I feel interested about. Have you any interest in this election?"

"I do not know, sir," said I "I never so much as heard of it before. It is little that the priests care about this sort of election; but I see its more concern to us than elections for the county."

"Yes, Tom, it is of very great importance," said he. "It is all very well to revile the Protestant religion; but I would ask you, as a sensible man, to tell me, which religion seems to you to be most according to truth, and most agreeable to the character of a Holy God? The religion which dependant upon a vote for a member of parliament; the religion that would send a man to hell if he did not vote as his priest wished; or the religion which, while it would thankfully accept the outward peace which good government gives, declares that its business is to lead souls to God, to fit them for heaven, and to labour to produce in them that faith and those good works which give good evidence that they have the 'election of God.' Which election do you think concerns the honour of Christ and the safety of our souls the most—the election for the county or the election of God? And which do you find the priests of the Church of Rome most anxious about?"

Mr. ——— and I then parted; but, to tell you the truth, John, I could not get what he said out of my head. I think there is a deal in it, and don't know what to think of our religion. There is so much violence, lying, threatening, and cursing, that it does not seem like the religion of the Lord Jesus, which proclaimed—"Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." I really do not know what to think; what do you say, John?

John.—Why, Tom, I say nothing, but I have my thoughts about it as well as you; and so they parted.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received Mr. Aylmer's letter, which shall be inserted in our next.

All letters to be addressed to the Editor, 9, Upper Sackville-st.

No anonymous letter can be attended to. Whatever is sent for insertion must be authenticated by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee for his good faith.

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The Catholic Layman.

DUBLIN, AUGUST, 1852.

THE IRISH ELECTIONS.

It is not our habit to engage in party politics, and it is not our intention to do so now. Advocates as we are of civil and religious liberty in the truest sense, we disclaim all desire to influence other men's actions, except by setting before them principles which they themselves may think fit to govern their conduct.

We write of the late elections in Ireland, not for the purpose of personal or individual censure, but to induce our brother Catholic laymen calmly to consider the principles on which many of those elections have been conducted, and to judge for themselves whether those principles be suitable for a free state and a Christian people. It is the principles we seek to discuss, and we use the facts only to show what the principles are.

The most striking fact in the Irish elections has been the manner in which the Roman Catholic clergy have interposed to control the choice of the electors. We feel that little proof of the fact is required, as most of our readers must be well aware of it from their own observations.

The Roman Catholic clergy have claimed for themselves the right of choosing the representatives, wherever they had any chance of being able to effect it by any means.

It would be ridiculous to give long proofs of so notorious a fact; so we give but a few—"Meath, in her priesthood, sat in calm council, and selected as her representative," &c. (letter of the Rev. Mr. Kelsh, a priest in Meath—*Tablet Newspaper*, July 31). Here it was the priests only who met to choose the representative; and "Meath" is said to have made the choice, as if it were the exclusive right of the priests to act for Meath, the laity having nothing to do but to obey, and, therefore, not being consulted in the matter. And accordingly we find Mr. Lucas and Mr. Corbally both acknowledging the power by which they were returned in the following words:—

"For sending him (Mr. Lucas) to parliament the bishop and clergy of Meath deserve and enjoy the gratitude of the Catholics of the empire."—*Tablet*, August 7.

"The number of votes recorded in his (Mr. Corbally's) favour amounted nearly to two thousand, and for those he was indebted to the bishop and the Catholic clergy. . . . If it had not been for the clergy HE WOULD HAVE BEEN BEATEN."—Speech at Meath election, *Tablet*, July 31.

Take again the great County of Tipperary—

"It is well known that it is the priests of Tipperary, and the priests alone, who can and will gain a triumph over the enemies of freedom, in this great county, at the coming election."—*Tablet*, July 10.

And Archbishop McHale, at the Galway election, expressly recognises and approves of it—

"No doubt the clergy of Ireland are very much responsible for their share in the result of the contests now waging through the land."—*Tablet*, July 24.

The means taken to carry into effect such elections are equally notorious. The priests having made their choice, were prepared to maintain that their choice was the choice of God, and that it was an offence against God to vote against their men.

We give one or two instances at random of the manner in which the priests have used their spiritual powers to force their candidates on electors.

An influential priest at Tralee is reported to have said:—

"Let me suppose one of THESE WRETCHES (those who would not vote as he bid them) prostrated by sickness—suppose the hand of death heavy upon him, and